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struments sent aloft on kite lines. This would be a step in advance, of the very greatest practical value in forecasting. The discussion of the data obtained by the Weather Bureau during the International Cloud Year is in the hands of Professor F. H. Bigelow, and his report is to be ready during the present year. That our Weather Bureau is carrying on a very important work, of immense value to the commercial and agricultural interests of this country, is emphatically proved by a glance at this Report. It is to be hoped that the Chief of the Weather Bureau may secure the additional appropriations which he needs in order to carry on and to extend the work under his direction.

In addition to the usual tables of meteorological data, the Report contains two monographs, *Rainfall of the United States*, by A. J. Henry, and *Floods of the Mississippi River*, by Park Morrill, already published as separate Bulletins by the Bureau.

#### THE MAURITIUS OBSERVATORY.

THE *Annual Report* of the Director of the Royal Alfred Observatory for the year 1896 brings official announcement of the resignation of Dr. Meldrum from the directorship of that Observatory, a position which he had held for 22 years. The work which Dr. Meldrum has done in connection with the law of storms is well known wherever meteorology is studied the world over, and meteorologists will always associate his name with that of the island in the Indian Ocean on which he lived so long and worked so indefatigably. The new Director is Mr. T. F. Claxton, F.R.A.S., whose name appears on the new volume of *Results of the Magnetical and Meteorological Observations made at the Royal Alfred Observatory, Mauritius, in the Year 1896*. This publication contains the daily, monthly and annual values of the principal meteorological ele-

ments, and the usual tables of magnetical observations.

#### WEST INDIAN HURRICANES.

THE Weather Bureau has recently published an important article on West Indian hurricanes by the late Father Benito Viñes, formerly Director of the Colegio de Belen, Habana. Viñes' previous monograph entitled *Apuntes relativos a los huracanes de las Antillas en Setiembre y Octubre de 1875 y 1876* is a classic. The present article was prepared by Father Viñes, shortly before his death, for the Chicago Meteorological Congress of 1893, and has been translated from the Spanish by Dr. C. Finley, of Habana, the author revising the greater part of it before his death. The title is *Investigation of the Cyclonic Circulation and the Translatory Movement of the West Indian Hurricanes*. Owing to the present interest in everything that concerns the meteorological conditions of the West Indies, the Chief of the Weather Bureau has wisely decided to give this article immediate publication, rather than to await its long-delayed appearance in the Bulletin (No. 11) which contains the papers prepared for the Chicago Congress, three parts of which have been issued, leaving the fourth still to come.

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#### CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

##### PYGMY TRIBE IN AMERICA.

So far as I am aware, no tribe of dwarf stature has been found in America. The Changos, of the Atacama desert, are probably the shortest. The average of the males is four feet nine inches. Of course, individual instances of dwarfs occur in many tribes, as they do among ourselves. These are due to other laws of growth than a generally diminished height.

In the *Revue* of the Paris School of Anthropology for July, Dr. Collineau

quotes a Mr. Sullivan, from our country apparently, who describes a tribe in Venezuela, on the Brazilian frontier, the males of which average four feet eight inches. The reference is too vague to admit of verification, and if some reader of SCIENCE can give further information about the statement it will be welcome to anthropologists.

#### THE TURANIANS AGAIN.

A FEW years ago, in European ethnography, the Mongolians reigned paramount. As Friedrich Müller said, 'Mongolian' or 'Turanian' was a sack into which all nations were thrust who could not be assigned elsewhere. Basques, Etruscans, Pelasgians, Ligurians, all were Mongolian.

For some time past there has been a lull in this mania; but in the July number of the *Revue de l'École d'Anthropologie*, Professor Herné brings forward a hypothesis surpassing in eccentricity even those previously advanced in this direction. He makes all the Celts, 'no matter in what region they may be studied,' of direct Mongolian descent. They entered Europe in the neolithic period, and brought with them a culture and a type of their own, their affinities being to-day markedly Turanian or Ural-Altaic. Surely this theory is a few years late.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF CITIES IN MODERN LIFE.

In one of his thoughtful studies published in the *Correspondant* (May, 1898) the Marquis de Nadaillac discusses the concentration of the population into cities, so marked in our day. Its chief cause is undoubtedly that more money can be made and more amusement obtained in cities than in the country.

In cities the mortality is greater, the natality less, than in the country. Marriage is not so common, illegitimate unions more frequent. Mental alienation increases; suicides are more numerous. Criminality as a whole is decidedly higher.

What is the remedy? asks the collector of the ominous facts. His reply is, unceasing effort to teach men that 'life has an aim nobler than gain, higher than material enjoyment.' All will agree with the conclusion.

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#### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

##### HONORARY DEGREES CONFERRED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

WE recorded the telegraphic despatch stating that the University of Edinburgh had conferred the honorary degree of LL.D. on Professor H. P. Bowditch and Professor William Osler. The University at its medical graduation ceremony conferred the degree on nineteen persons, all of whom but two were in attendance on the meeting of the Medical Association. The complete list is as follows: Henry Pickering Bowditch, M.D., member of the National Academy of Sciences, United States of America, Professor of Physiology, Harvard University; Sir William Broadbent, M.D., F.R.S.; Thomas Lauder Brunton, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.S., Lecturer on Materia Medica, St. Bartholomew's Hospital School, London; Eugene Louis Doyen, M.D., Paris; David Ferrier, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., Professor of Neuropathology, King's College, London; Joseph Forster, M.D., Professor of Hygiene and Bacteriology, University of Strassburg; M. le Comte de Franqueville, Officer of the Legion of Honor, member of the Institute of France; Carl Gerhardt, M.D., Professor of Medicine, University of Berlin; Richard Burdon Haldane, Q.C., M.P., Jonathan Hutchinson, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., Emeritus-Professor of Surgery, London Hospital College; Theodor Kocher, M.D., Professor of Surgery, University of Berne; August Martin, M.D., Professor of Gynecology, University of Berlin; Johann Miculicz, M.D., Professor of Surgery, University of Breslau; Ottavio Morisani, M.D., Professor of Midwifery, University of Naples; William Osler, M.D., LL.D., Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore; William Playfair, M.D., LL.D., Professor of Obstetric Medicine, King's College, London; Thomas